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SUBJECT: VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER TO RWANDA
APRIL 4-8

REF: A. KIGALI 4
[B](#). KIGALI 334

Classified By: Polchief LChang for reasons 1.4(b), (d).

[1](#)1. (C) In a successful, productive visit to Rwanda April 4-8, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer engaged in candid discussion on a broad range of issues from regional security, bilateral relations, and Darfur to democracy and human rights. In her meetings with senior GOR officials, parliamentarians and press, she highlighted the need to address lingering sources of instability in the region, notably the FDLR,s continued presence in the DRC. She also urged the GOR to strive to correct negative perceptions of Rwanda as well as to improve performance in the areas of human rights and good governance. She encouraged the GOR to support the transition in Darfur from the AU to UN leadership and to play a more active role in promoting a peace settlement. As a personal friend and colleague of President Kagame, Assistant Secretary Frazer received a warm welcome and, in a gesture of GOR hospitality and appreciation of USG support to Rwanda, was invited, along with Ambassador Arietti, to accompany the President in his private helicopter to the National Genocide Commemoration.

[1](#)2. (U) A/S Frazer met with President Kagame and senior GOR officials, including the Foreign Minister and Rwandan Presidential Envoy to the Great Lakes Region. She visited a USAID-funded coffee cooperative, a demobilization and reintegration center for former FDLR combatants, and the site of the new chancery compound. She also called on the president of the Senate, engaged in roundtable discussions with parliamentarians representing a cross-section of political parties (septel) and with pro-government and independent local press, met with U.S. Mission staff and some members of the local diplomatic corps, and attended the 12th annual National Genocide Commemoration, which marked the beginning of a week (April 7-14) of mourning and remembrance for the victims of the 1994 Genocide.

Visit to Coffee Cooperative

[1](#)3. (U) During her April 5 visit to the USAID-funded Cooperative for Promotion of Coffee Activities (COOPAC) on the shores of Lake Kivu in Gisenyi Province, A/S Frazer met with COOPAC president Emmanuel Nzungize Rwakagara and ACDI/VOCA (USAID Food-for-Peace NGO grantee) Chief of Party Paul DeLucco, and observed first-hand various stages of the coffee washing and drying process. COOPAC registered as a coffee cooperative in April 2001 with 110 coffee producers

with the mission of improving the well-being of its members by promoting the cultivation, processing, and marketing of high quality Arabica Bourbon Mayaguez coffee. Currently, 2,198 members participate in the cooperative.

¶4. (U) ACDI/VOCA Grants Coordinator Xaverine Uwimana noted that COOPAC is the largest coffee washing station in Rwanda, producing 400 metric tons of fully washed coffee per day. DeLucco pointed out that in November 2003 COOPAC was certified by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO), permitting the cooperative to sell all of its first-year production of A Grade coffee at the FLO floor price of USD 1.26/lb., more than twice the prevailing market price of approximately USD 0.60/lb. In 2004, gross export coffee sales from the cooperative generated USD 316,000 in revenues. In 2005, gross export sales totaled USD 249,480 due to poor rainfall in 2005. ACDI/VOCA, the lead USAID implementing partner in this enterprise, provided direct grant assistance of approximately USD 250,000, including grants for construction and equipment of the washing station, and sponsored focused marketing visits to the U.S. and Europe.

Visit to Mutobo Center

¶5. (C) At the Mutobo Demobilization and Reintegration Center, Dr. Frazer met with Jean Sayinzoga, Chairman of the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC), and Center Director Frank Musonera. Musonera noted that the Center currently houses 153 former FDLR combatants, including 7 who are temporarily visiting their home villages and 3 who have been admitted to the hospital for treatment of minor injuries. (Note: Under RDRC policy all returning ex-combatants are given a temporary pass to visit their

families prior to beginning the demobilization training. End note.) The Center receives an average of 7 former combatants per week. The last large group (of approximately 130 ex-combatants) arrived with former FDLR Commander Brig. General Amani (ref A). Since its opening in March 2003, the Center has graduated a total of 5,795 ex-combatants. The 60-day reintegration program established by the RDRC includes classes on national security, history of Rwanda, genocide and its consequences, human rights, patriotism, gender issues, the justice system, and the gacaca courts.

¶6. (C/NF) Musonera explained that upon discharge each returnee is given 50,000 RF (about USD 90) and a discharge card to present to his home community as evidence that he has stopped fighting. If reintegration is deemed successful, the returnee is given an additional 100,000 RF (about USD 180). RDRC has offices in every district and representatives to handle any problems with reintegration. Each district is responsible for the daily follow-up of reintegrating ex-combatants. When asked how the ex-combatants arrive at the Center, Musonera responded that MONUC transports them to the DRC-Rwanda border and hands them over to the GOR, and the RDRC transports them to the Center. He commented that none of the graduates has returned to the DRC and none has been called to testify in gacaca courts. (Note: Post receiving conflicting confidential information that 5-10 percent have returned to eastern Congo. End note.) Musonera stated that the majority of suspected genocidaires are still in the Congo, and estimated the average age of returnees at 26, although some ex-FARDC are over the age of 40.

¶7. (U) In her remarks to the attentive, disciplined audience of 143 ex-combatants, Frazer noted that she had just recently visited Goma and Kinshasa where she met with Congolese President Kabila, North Kivu Governor Serafuli, MONUC officials, and the Congolese Minister of Defense, and would meet with President Kagame and senior GOR officials during her visit to Rwanda. She told them she had been sent by President Bush to better understand how to bring about regional security and wanted to better understand their life in the Congo, the challenges they had faced, and ways the USG can encourage their friends and colleagues to return home.

She said she wanted to see for herself the success of the Rwandan demobilization and reintegration program she had heard about in Washington. But most of all, she wanted to commend them for returning home and contributing to peace in their country and in the region.

¶18. (C) All the ex-combatants who offered personal, individual testimony of their defection from the FDLR and arduous journey back to Rwanda spoke of the dangers and difficulties they had experienced and the long distances they had to travel to reach MONUC units. They said their comrades in the DRC all want to return home but some of them have families in the DRC whom it would be difficult to leave behind. Approximately one-third of the group indicated by a show of hands that they had left families behind. They also indicated that some of their compatriots were hesitant to return due to their lack of information about the situation on the ground in Rwanda. They described life in the Congo as very difficult and MONUC as not helpful because MONUC units are too far from where FDLR units are based. When asked how many had actually exchanged gunfire with MONUC, only six of the 143 ex-combatants indicated they had fought MONUC units. One ex-combatant stated that his unit never had the intention of fighting MONUC and that they fought only if their areas of operation happened to overlap. He commented that MONUC knows the FDLR's areas of operation, but that the FDLR is more familiar with its own zones.

¶19. (C) One former combatant, who had been badly wounded while deserting the FDLR, said that when his plans to desert became known to FDLR leadership, he was followed and shot. He said that many combatants want to return to Rwanda but that they do not have the freedom to do so. When asked what would help, he replied that MONUC forces need to move closer to the areas occupied by FDLR. When asked what FDLR leaders specifically fear, he responded that the leaders tell the soldiers only that they want to overthrow the regime, but noted that gacaca is among the factors they seem to fear.

¶110. (C) Another ex-combatant observed that MONUC fears the FDLR, but some FDLR soldiers fear MONUC. He said that most of the FDLR leaders had fled Rwanda after committing atrocities and, therefore, fear being subjected to gacaca if they return, so they stay in the bush and keep others

&hostage8 with them as cover. He explained that most of the FDLR leaders know there is peace now in Rwanda and that this is why they do not want the rank and file to listen to Radio Rwanda and why they try to distort the message. Sometimes they even prohibit the soldiers from listening to the national anthem of Rwanda.

¶111. (C) He reiterated that MONUC's distance from FDLR bases makes it very difficult for FDLR soldiers to defect because the FDLR follows them and shoots them. Another former combatant explained that it is increasingly dangerous as one moves further from the center of DRC territory and closer to the Rwandan border because the FDLR are deployed all around and as one moves further toward the border the FDLR becomes more suspicious. Although MONUC is aware of all the routes to the border, the major routes are occupied by Congolese soldiers.

¶112. (C) Another ex-combatant recounted that when he reached MONUC he was told that only he and another soldier who had weapons would be accepted while the four others without weapons would not be accepted. The four were told to return to the FDLR as they did not have weapons to prove they were soldiers despite assurances from him and the other armed soldier that they were comrades. The four soldiers rejected by MONUC returned to the bush and told their comrades that MONUC was discouraging others from coming out. He surmised that perhaps MONUC was more interested in guns than the soldiers themselves. The story that MONUC sent unarmed FDLR deserters back to retrieve their weapons was recounted by several ex-combatants who explained that sometimes they had heavy guns impossible to carry long distances. Another ex-combatant, who was recruited by force while in the Congo

in 2000, reported that some companions are still in Bukavu, refusing to return home.

Parliamentary Roundtable

¶13. (U) During a roundtable discussion (reported septel) with five Rwandan parliamentarians representing a cross-section of political parties and a separate call on Senate president Dr. Vincent Biruta, A/S Frazer addressed recent developments in the Great Lakes region, human rights issues, the role of parliament in Rwanda, and the pace of reconciliation in the country. The parliamentarians expressed gratitude for A/S Frazer's interest in the FDLR issue, which they suggested had been overlooked by the international community. Dr. Frazer stressed the importance not only of the international community and the Congolese government putting pressure on the FDLR to leave the Congo, but also of the GOR creating positive conditions in country that would serve as a pull factor in bringing the fighters home. The parliamentarians strongly defended Rwanda's human rights record, arguing that complaints by former government officials overseas are attempts at justification for asylum in countries with well-paid jobs rather than the result of a genuine fear of persecution in Rwanda.

Meeting with President Kagame and Senior GOR Officials

¶14. (C) In a meeting April 6 (ref B) with President Kagame, Foreign Minister Murigande, Chef du Cabinet Kabija, and National Security Service Secretary General Ndahiro, Kagame provided Assistant Secretary Frazer with his perspective on improved relations between the GOR and GDRC and the performance of MONUC. A/S Frazer engaged Kagame on Sudan and U.S.-Rwanda bilateral issues, including democracy and governance, socio-economic development and the Millennium Challenge Account.

¶15. (C) Kagame expressed satisfaction with the current status of communications with the GDRC and said he understands the limits of MONUC and the Congolese Armed Forces. Noting that the most dangerous risk to Rwanda is outside support to the FDLR, he held that the political aspect of the GOR-GDRC relationship is more important than the current lack of military action, which he said could be worked out over time.

Kagame noted that the Rwandan forces on the ground in Sudan were discouraged by the lack of progress made by the AU to help the people. He agreed with Dr. Frazer's assessment that an Abuja agreement is unlikely in April. He stated that the GOR's highest priorities remain socio-economic development and governance issues, and that the latter could be best handled internally. Frazer noted that for Rwanda to qualify

for Millennium Challenge Account threshold status it would have to change some negative external perceptions of Rwanda as well as improve performance in areas such as human rights and good governance.

Meeting with Rwandan Envoy to Great Lakes Region

¶16. (C) During a private meeting April 8 with Dr. Richard Sezibera, Rwandan Presidential Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, A/S Frazer encouraged the GOR to play a more proactive role in supporting the proposed handover of the AU Mission in Darfur to the United Nations. She noted that the AU had played a laudable role in establishing a foreign presence to stop the Darfur genocide, but the challenges and needs are now such that a UN operation, which would have more money and capability, is needed. She noted that Sudan has already agreed to a UN Mission in southern Sudan and it is unacceptable that the AU should permit Sudan to have a veto over the proposed UN Darfur operation. She expressed appreciation for Rwanda's role in Darfur to date and encouraged the GOR to participate in the UN operation as well.

¶17. (C) Sezibera acknowledged that the AU is having a difficult time handling the challenges of Darfur and that the Rwandan military agrees on the need for a more robust, better staffed and financed operation. He lamented the failure of senior AU officials to even visit Darfur. While indicating support for the USG position, Sezibera underscored the fact that Sudan is insisting on a peace agreement prior to agreeing to a UN force and that this is a problem for the AU.

¶18. (C) Sezibera agreed with A/S Frazer's assessment of the situation in the DRC, noting that Rwandan-Congolese relations are much better today than in the past. The GOR continues to believe that MONUC is making insufficient efforts to confront the FDLR, but recognizes that immediate priorities in the Congo will focus on the holding of the June elections. He confirmed that FDLR leader Ignace Murwanashyaka had left Congo and was now in Germany under detention. He charged that Ugandan authorities had been aware of his transit through Uganda and had, in fact, met with him.

¶19. (C) Sezibera welcomed the ongoing GOR-USG dialogue on human rights and democracy issues. He reiterated the GOR view that the USG does not give Rwanda sufficient credit for what it has achieved and that it is a mistake to minimize the problems the country faces in recovering from the genocide. He agreed that the Embassy should propose a series of next steps to deepen the dialogue and address specific issues in more depth.

National Genocide Commemoration

¶20. (U) In his public remarks (delivered mostly in Kinyarwanda) at the 12th National Genocide Commemoration on April 7 in Nyamasheke in the Western Province, President Kagame highlighted the commemoration as a time of remembrance for the victims of the Genocide. He acknowledged that the Genocide is a bad history,⁸ but Rwanda's history nevertheless. He urged Rwanda to have the courage to face its own history and problems and the causes and consequences of the Genocide. Avoiding the consequences, he said, would be comparable to standing by and doing nothing or even participating in the killings during the Genocide.

¶21. (U) He pointed out that although difficult it is important to try to understand Rwanda's history so that the atrocities that occurred will never happen again. He noted that Rwandans lost their dignity and self-respect when they killed each other. He added that foreign countries and foreigners bear different levels of responsibility; some merely supported the killers, while others participated in the killings, but they are just as criminal as the Rwandans who participated. He urged Rwandans to speak the truth, be patient, forgive, look to the future, and work together to build a better country that restores dignity and humanity to all Rwandans and promotes respect for every human being.

¶22. (U) He stressed that outside critics need to understand that Rwanda's history is complicated and that Rwanda is doing everything it can to grapple with its difficult past and to rebuild the country. Rwanda, he said, does not owe anything to anyone; it owes itself the debt of facing its own

history and problems. He stressed, however, that everyone -- Rwandans and foreigners alike -- have a responsibility for the bad history.⁸

¶23. (U) He pointed out that divisionism has been part of Rwanda's history, not a pretext or rumor, which Rwanda must address. He emphasized that the root causes of divisionism that led to the genocide must be uprooted and that Rwanda needs everyone's support and understanding in this difficult, long-term endeavor, not unfounded criticism⁸ or lessons on politics.⁸ Rwanda has had enough of political lessons through the bloody history it lived through. He lauded the many heroic survivors and rescuers, some of whom shared their personal testimonies at the commemoration event, as the true unsung heroes.

Press Roundtable

¶24. (U) During an April 8 roundtable with pro-government and independent senior print and broadcast media representatives, discussion focused on regional stability, human rights, Darfur, and the national genocide anniversary. In her opening remarks, A/S Frazer noted that the purpose of her visit to the region was to look at regional stability and security issues and to assess the usefulness of the Tripartite Plus mechanism. She noted the positive developments taking place in the DRC, but highlighted the need to address lingering sources of instability in the region, notably the FDLR's continued presence in the DRC. She also noted the USG's continued efforts to promote economic development and reconciliation in Rwanda. While in Rwanda, she said she had the opportunity to meet with a broad range of officials, including parliamentarians, and to visit a USG-funded coffee cooperative.

¶25. (U) When asked by a Radio 10 reporter Theophile Ndizihiwe for comment on the U.S. Human Rights Report on Rwanda, Frazer noted positive developments in a number of areas and welcomed the GOR's formation of a high-level inter-ministerial working group to examine human rights issues and the government's willingness to engage in dialogue on these issues. Responding to a question from Radio Contact FM reporter Eugene Mutara on the U.S. perspective twelve years after the 1994 genocide, Frazer said that the challenge of reconciliation in Rwanda, where the people who killed and those with family members who died during the genocide continue to live side by side, cannot be underestimated. Rwanda stands as a symbol of what cannot be allowed to happen again, which is why the USG has been actively engaged in efforts to resolve the Darfur conflict.

¶26. (U) In response to a query from The New Times Sub-Chief Editor Julius Mwesigye on the USG position on reparations for genocide survivors, Frazer replied that it is an internal Rwandan matter on which the USG does not have a position. She said the USG will continue to assist in the development of civil society and the economy of Rwanda, noting the need to increase the prosperity of all Rwandans. Reuters reporter Arthur Assimwe asked Frazer for her reaction to President Kagame's speech at the April 7 National Genocide Commemoration. Frazer responded that she took Kagame's message in a positive light, noting that Rwanda has a very difficult path ahead, with difficult issues requiring difficult solutions. She stressed that it is important that criticisms made by outsiders take this into account.

¶27. (U) Radio Rwanda reporter Isaac Mugabi asked whether the U.S. is active in Sudan only because of the presence of oil and whether the U.S. believes genocide is taking place in Darfur. Frazer responded that the U.S. has repeatedly stated that genocide is taking place in Sudan and that the U.S. is involved in Sudan for one reason -- to end the killings there. The U.S. first took an active role in 2001 in peace negotiations between North and South Sudan when President Bush saw that civilians were being killed and decided the U.S. needed to do what it could to bring the killings to an end. Frazer noted that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on Sudan and that she has not approved a single request for any American oil company to explore oil opportunities in Sudan. Frazer praised the initiatives taken by countries such as Senegal, South Africa, Rwanda, and Nigeria, and called on other African countries to speak out against the killings in Sudan. Noting that the international community previously established a successful model in Burundi for the transfer of

African Union peacekeeping forces to a UN force, Frazer stated that she did not see why this model could not be successful in Sudan as well.

¶28. (U) Agence France Press reporter Helen Vesperini asked

how concerned the USG is over the deterioration in relations between Uganda and Rwanda and whether the U.S. had any reaction to the reports that the political head of the FDLR had been arrested. Frazer responded that she was not too concerned about relations between Uganda and Rwanda, noting that many of the issues can be resolved through normal diplomatic channels and that both countries participate in the Tripartite Plus mechanism which provides another means for resolving any areas of contention. Frazer said she was much more concerned with Ituri and the porous border between the DRC and Rwanda. She said she had not seen any reports on the FDLR leader's recent capture and, therefore, could not comment. She noted, however, that she had visited the Mutobo Center and had spoken extensively with several former FDLR Combatants, many of whom had been only children when they left Rwanda and who had run a great risk of being shot when running toward MONUC positions to give themselves up. She commented that FDLR leaders were attempting to justify their continued presence in the DRC by keeping followers around them.

129. (U) Focus Editor Evan Weinberger inquired whether the USG supports sending Charles Taylor to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for trial. Frazer noted that it is not an issue of ICC jurisdiction but a question of the trial's venue. The U.S. has no objection to a change in venue. The courts in The Hague have the necessary facilities to handle such a trial. On a follow-up question on the implications of Taylor's arrest, Frazer said that it should serve as an example to the Sudanese leadership that officials in Africa are increasingly being brought to justice for their actions. In response to a second follow-up question as to whether Rwandan and Ugandan officials also should be held accountable for their actions, Frazer said that she could not speak in abstract terms but that there is no reason to rule out any official being brought to justice. She noted that even Charles Taylor has the right to a defense and that all such cases should be tried in accordance with the rule of law.

130. (U) The New Times Sub-Chief Editor Mwesigye asked whether the USG is satisfied with preparations in the DRC for the upcoming presidential elections. Frazer noted she was encouraged by the large number of Congolese who have registered to vote and that the Congolese government, with the support of the UN and other organizations, is working hard to prepare for the elections. She noted, however, that a tight schedule had been set for the elections and that it may be necessary to push back the election date beyond the currently scheduled June 18. While every effort should be directed toward holding elections as scheduled, many administrative and logistical tasks would have to be completed for that to happen. She expressed the hope that if the date does slide, it would not slide far. In response to a follow-up question regarding the delay in printing of ballots, Frazer explained her understanding that the UN is reviewing unsolicited bids for ballot printing and is in the process of awarding a contract. She said the UN has expertise and experience in this area and that it is a normal part of the process for the UN to work with the Congolese government in this aspect of the election.

131. (U) Radio 10 reporter Ndizihiwe inquired about the UN Rapporteur's report on USG detentions at Guantanamo and whether the U.S. plans to shut down the detention facility. Frazer responded that UN investigators have a role to play, but that it would have been helpful had they visited the facility before drafting their report. Given the continuing war on terrorism as well as the need to detain those who constitute a threat to the U.S., she indicated that she did not anticipate that the detention facility would be closed any time soon.

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